

REMARKS

Claim 1 is presently pending in this application. In the an Office Action dated August 15, 2003, the Examiner rejected claim 1 as obvious over Lin et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,292,582) in view of Takagi et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,438,438). Applicants respectfully traverse.

Lin discloses a system and method for identifying defects in a semiconductor. Lin teaches "associating a descriptive label with an anomaly on a manufactured object, such as a semiconductor wafer." Lin, Abstract. The method includes capturing a digital pixel-based image and decomposing the image to create a primitive-based representation of the image. The primitive-based representation of the image is then analyzed for any anomalies. When an anomaly is detected, the primitives associated with the anomaly are isolated. The isolated primitives are then compared with primitives in the knowledge-base to locate primitives that are most like the isolated primitives associated with the anomaly. The method includes assigning a label to the set of primitives in the knowledge base most like the isolated primitives. Lin, col. 2, lines 28-56.

The system in Lin includes a moveable stage for holding the semiconductor wafer, a camera for capturing images of the wafer, a digitizer and computer programs that convert the digitized images to primitive-based representations of the image and analyze the primitive-based representations for anomalies. Lin, col. 2, lines 28-56. The systems and methods described by Lin relate to analyzing data from images of semiconductor wafers to determine the extent to which the data indicates anomalies.

Lin does not describe making wafer examination systems more flexible by allowing the user to modify defect detection parameters on the bases of any defect detection areas. In particular, Lin does not disclose "editing means for editing the defect detection parameters on the basis of the defective areas displayed by the defective area display means." The Examiner asserted in rejecting claim 1 that Lin discloses "editing means..." at col. 17, lines 62-67 and col. 18 at lines 1-5. That passage however does not recite editing means having defect detection parameter

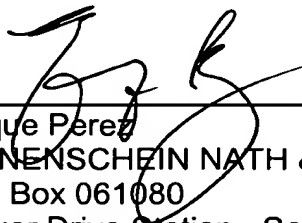
read means or defect detection parameter manual selection means as recited in amended claim 1.

Takagi, the other reference relied upon by the Examiner also does not relate to allowing the user to modify defect detection parameters. Takagi discloses a system and method for inspecting a product. The method in Takagi includes steps of extracting defects from the product, classifying the defects on the basis of information about the extracted defects representing the analogy of the defects, and extracting the feature data of the defects on the basis of the result of defect classification. The feature data is then fed back and used for inspection of the product. Takagi, Abstract. Takagi relates to systems and methods for modifying inspection procedures based on feature data that is fed back into the system.

Applicants have amended claim 1 to more particularly point out and distinctly claim what they regard as their invention. Claim 1 now recites that "editing means" comprises "defect detection parameter read means for reading out from a defect parameter storage device, and defect detection parameter manual selection means so that values may be selected for them by the user on the basis of the defect detection parameter shown on the defective area display means." Neither Lin nor Takagi, alone or in combination, disclose or suggest editing means having defect detection parameter read means or defect detection parameter manual selection means as recited in amended claim 1.

Applicants submit that claim 1 is allowable. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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